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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 4, 1977

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Cyrus Vance CRV

~~Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/B&P~~
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 Date 5/15/77

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 1. Bongo Comments on PLO: After you left the meeting with President Bongo yesterday, I asked him whether, in his opinion, there is any willingness on the part of the PLO to recognize the right of Israel to exist. Bongo replied that two PLO representatives (whose names escaped him) called on him recently in Gabon and gave him the impression that their position had changed somewhat. They appeared to agree to recognize the existence of Israel as an independent and sovereign state, no longer make their claims for complete repossession of Jerusalem, accepted a small part of the West Bank for their own state, and are agreeable to some kind of a federation with Jordan. The Palestinians told Bongo that they would have to accept the link with Jordan if only because they are without resources and could not survive alone. The Palestinians also told Bongo that they wanted to be able to attend the Geneva Conference at which a third country like the US would make a set of proposals along the lines mentioned above. According to Bongo's PLO visitor, Arafat is prepared to accept such an overall plan.

It is, of course, hard for me to assess the PLO reactions that Bongo reported. We do not know the identity of his visitors or their relationship to Arafat. We will, of course, be very attentive to any indication that the PLO position may be evolving along the lines described by Bongo. The PLO is holding a congress on March 12 and we may conceivably see some small sign of change or flexibility then.

2. Habib Before Diggs Subcommittee: Yesterday afternoon, Phil Habib testified on our southern Africa policy before Charlie Diggs' subcommittee on African

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Affairs. As you know, Diggs and the other members of the subcommittee are very attentive to the need to have our African policy made consistent with our commitment to social justice. Phil described your administration's current review of southern Africa policy as an effort aimed at strengthening the U.S. commitment to Rhodesia, Namibia, and South Africa. The committee reacted very positively to our approach. Several members suggested policy tacks that Phil agreed we would take into serious consideration. Charlie Diggs made clear that the subcommittee would be taking a hard look to see how well our actions in southern Africa square with our announced intentions. Nevertheless, I believe that we have gotten off to a good start with a committee whose cooperation and support will be vital as we attempt to establish a consensus on southern Africa policy.

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3. Argentina Spurns Foreign Military Sales Credits: The Argentine government has now formally notified us that it will not use its foreign military sales credit for FY '78. In a call on Warren Christopher, the Argentine Ambassador rejected the charge that Argentina was violating human rights. He also complained that his government had first heard of our aid cutoff from press reports of my testimony before the Inouye Committee. Warren replied that we were aware of Argentina's security problems, but he emphasized again the importance we attach to the rule of law and protection of human rights. Warren then reminded the Ambassador that we had warned Argentina previously that in our opinion it had become necessary to exercise some restraint in its anti-terrorist campaign.

4. Soviet American Maritime Accord: In late January we passed on to the Soviets a diplomatic note indicating that as of March 1 we intend to enforce a fishing jurisdiction that will follow the line set forth in the 1867 U.S.-Russian Convention that ceded Alaska to the U.S. This unilateral decision on our part was designed to discourage any attempt to renegotiate a key maritime boundary line in the Bering Sea. Several days ago the Soviets told us that they could accept our position. As a result we have avoided a potentially difficult boundary dispute and gained undisputed control over significant fisheries resources. Here is an instance of Soviet moderation which demonstrates that it is still possible to reach understandings with the Soviets on key issues despite disagreements on strategic or human rights questions.
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5. Conversation with the Jamaican Foreign Minister:
Warren Christopher and I met with Jamaican Foreign Minister Patterson yesterday to discuss bilateral relations and prospects for increased U.S. economic assistance. The Jamaicans do not hide their interest in trying to improve relations with us and proposed that a group of technical experts meet to study aid and trade questions. I said we would try to find a mutually convenient time for a short meeting between you and Prime Minister Manley.

On economic questions, the Jamaicans told me of their intention to resume discussions with the IMF in April in an effort to win further support for the ailing Jamaican economy. When I stressed the desirability of a negotiated settlement of the Revere bauxite dispute, Patterson responded that there was still disagreement between his government and the company over the value of Revere's facilities. However, the case had been taken to the Jamaican courts and the government would abide by the decision of the courts.

Patterson said that the Jamaicans feel they can benefit from Cuba's experience, especially in the construction of housing, schools and microdams, and they hope that the United States and Cuba will improve relations. Patterson also expressed hope for a new Panama Canal treaty.

6. Namibia: We called in South African Ambassador Botha this morning to ask for an update on his government's thinking on Namibia. Botha said that his government had not ruled out trying for an internationally acceptable settlement and that he personally believes that many of the seven points negotiated last September in Pretoria with Henry Kissinger still offer a basis for a negotiated settlement. However, the South African government also wants to keep the Namibian constitutional conference (which excludes SWAPO as an organization) alive and to include its participants in the negotiations for a final settlement. When we reiterated to Botha that time was of the essence in getting the Namibian peace process moving again, he promised to report our views to his government and be back to us next week.

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